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homogeneous race, which varies but slightly anywhere on the continent, and has maintained its type unimpaired for countless generations. Never at any time before Columbus was it influenced by blood, language, or culture by any other race. This is a bold position, not necessary to the Atlantic origin of the Americans. Indeed, it is easy to affirm the very opposite, and, frankly, in the present state of the inquiry, only conjectural proof can be advanced on either side. Nor does it detract from the great merit of these lectures as the best general treatise we have on races and peoples that they are strung upon a theory which may break at any moment.

In the last chapter the author treats of acclimation, amalgamation, infertility of mixtures, civilization affecting savagery, extinction of races, especially the American Indian and the insular peoples. The charts and diagrams in the volume will be of great use to college professors and others who have not the facilities for working out the problems for themselves.

OTIS T. MASON.

Myths and Folk-Tales of the Russians, Western Slavs, and Magyars.

By Jeremiah Curtin. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1890,
pp. vi-555, 8°.

The first thing to be noticed in Mr. Curtin's book is the spirit in which it is written. The desiccation of mythology, in the modern professedly scientific treatment, has been carried to its last terms. Mr. Andrew Lang, for example, takes no pains to conceal his contempt for the barbarous and, as he considers, utterly irrational conceptions, which he nevertheless thinks worth while to examine. Now, in the opinion of the writer, it is desirable that he who treats of folk-lore should himself possess something of the myth-making faculty. This poetic manner of looking on the world Mr. Curtin does retain, as is illustrated by a very beautiful passage of his introduction. For this quality we are grateful to him and believe that no one can read the work without finding himself agreeably affected in this regard.

The collection is intended to present, for general readers, a selection of tales of a popular character. Mr. Curtin has in an eminent degree the linguistic sense, and his versions, fluent and spirited, compare more than favorably with those of W. R. S. Ralston in his well-known "Russian Folk-Tales," and of W. H. Jones and L. L. Kropf in "The Folk-Tales of the Magyars," printed in 1889 by

the (British) Folk-Lore Society. The volume contains 19 Russian tales from the great collection of Afanasieff, six Chekh stories from works of Z. Radostova and B. M. Kulda, and six Magyar tales taken, with one exception, from the writings of Merényi. An imperfect acquaintance with Russian enables the writer to speak with all praise of the accuracy of the versions from that tongue, an excellency which no doubt exists throughout the book. Here and there the translator has permitted himself the use of Americanisms; these we find an adornment rather than a blemish. Why should not American dialectic phrases have as much right on a printed page as dialectic turns of speech which first see the light in Great Britain? The book will be read with pleasure and profit by those who are fond of folk-literature.

In his brief introduction Mr. Curtin announces certain views respecting theoretic mythology. It will be time enough to comment on these when they are put forward in detail. In presenting his tales he also alludes to the place in European civilization of the peoples from whose languages the narrations are taken. Here, however, it seems, may be introduced a caution. Folk-tales, to speak in general, are Russian, Magyar, or Gaelic only in respect of their language and of the subsidiary ornaments and mythologic dress which the incidents have received, and only in these respects have they relation to ethnology. Considered as to the substratum, they are not national, but international; they belong to a common European and, indeed, also Asiatic stock. This important consideration is well illustrated by the first of Mr. Curtin's tales, called "The Three Kingdoms—the Copper, the Silver, and the Golden." This story belongs to a type very widely diffused, namely, the history of "the youth who frees three kings' daughters from a subterranean prison, but is himself abandoned by treacherous brothers or comrades, underground, whence, however, he soon emerges and unmasks the traitors." (See remarks of R. Köhler, *Jahrbuch für Englische Literatur*, vii, 2^o, f., viii, 244 f.) "T. F. Crane, *Italian Popular Tales*," No. vii, gives a form belonging to Italy, which no one can read without perceiving the essential identity of the Italian and Russian. The oldest version of this tale is to be found in the Mongolian Siddhi-Kür, where it forms the third narration. In the latter the story is simple and easily intelligible through the mythology of India, whence the Mongols must have obtained it in a Sanscrit form, probably through Buddhistic influences. The nature

of the relationship between the Oriental and European myths rather lends color, in this single instance, to the theory of Benfey that the Western stories were derived, in the middle age, from the Eastern, and have subsequently developed into the multitude of varieties now known to exist in almost every civilized country. A similar remark may be made concerning the last of the Russian tales contained in this volume before us, "Vassilissa, the Cunning," which is curiously identical with *Cath nan Eun*, or, The Battle of the Birds, No. 2 of the Gaelic collection of Campbell. The writer is in possession of an unpublished English folk-tale belonging to the same series. This want of local originality in material is one reason why collectors in some instances have felt called upon to polish up the stories obtained by them and provide these with a suitable literary dress, as has been done in some of the Magyar tales. However, in spite of this general similarity, folk-tales are not useless to mythology. The Russians in particular have a character of freshness and preserve old mythologic conceptions, which have been added to the original element by the people adopting the tales. Does this character, however, imply greater primitiveness, as, for example, when in the tale first noted the hero, who in most European versions of the story is represented to be simply a giant or magician, is called Whirlwind, as Mr. Curtin translates the name? We can only say that to us this greater antiquity appears doubtful, and that we are much disposed to believe that the Russians, in this case, in spite of their objections to European civilization, had paid that civilization the unconscious compliment of borrowing from their southern neighbors. Indeed, even traits from literary French tales of the eighteenth century have found their way into Russian stories.

We are quite ready to admit, however, that there is in the coloring and treatment of these tales by Russians much that is interesting in a mythological point of view, and we cannot too strongly commend the activity and enthusiasm of the translator in pursuing his favorite study.

W. W. NEWELL.

De la langue et de l'écriture indigènes au Yün-nân, par M. Paul Vial, Missionnaire Apostolique du Yün-nân. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890.

This contribution to our very meagre knowledge of the language, and especially the undeciphered script of the Lolas of Western China, is, we hope, only the first we may expect from the pen of the